

# Relational Evangelism

## Easy as 1-2-3



### Begin with One.

*-In the economy of God, lost people are infinitely valuable.*

Evangelism is often thought of as a big event but the truth is that people come into the Kingdom one life at a time. Jesus used the following parable to illustrate just how valuable each life is to God.

*Then Jesus told them this parable: Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after his lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.*

*-Luke 15:3-7*

Things to remember when reaching out to your friends, neighbors, co-workers and lost relatives. In relational evangelism, one first seeks to relate to another person, finds common ground or earns the right to be heard and then looks for an opportunity to share the good news.

- ⇒ Avoid Manipulation
- ⇒ Differentiate between your goals and your desires
- ⇒ Pray for your desires
- ⇒ Take responsibility for your goals

*-A goal is an objective under my control. A desire is an objective I may legitimately and fervently want, but I cannot reach it through my efforts alone.*

*-Dr. Larry Crabb in *The Marriage Builder**

To discover who God is calling you to reach, discover your Network. A network is a social system built around four elements: biological, recreational, geographical, and vocational. The criteria for including people in your network are...

- 1.
2. You know them on a first name basis
3. You have regular contact with them
4. They don't seem to enjoy a personal relationship with God at this point
5. You feel they are responsive to you or open to cultivating a relationship based on common ground

Common ground is defined as shared areas of interest, background, experience, ability or life situation that serve as a basis for developing a relationship. The Apostle Paul described it this way:

*<sup>19</sup>Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. <sup>20</sup>To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. <sup>21</sup>To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. <sup>22</sup>To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. <sup>23</sup>I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.*

*-I Cor. 9:19-23*

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## Evangelistic Principles

**1. Evangelism is a process!** The major decisions in life are the result of many mini-decisions. When we buy a car or a house we like to see all the options. We want time to think about it. Relational evangelism allows people time to process what they are learning. Jesus alluded to this in John.

*Already he who reaps is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.*

-John 4:36

**2. The results belong to God!** What a freeing concept! We tell the world how much our Savior loves them but God does the work in their hearts. He is one who grows the faith in their hearts.

*"...who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by men, but by my Father in heaven."*

Matt. 16:15-17

*What after all is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe-as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow."*

I Cor. 3:5-7

Our job is to be vessels that God can use in His redemptive plan. That means that live lives that will draw others to our Savior. Paul said ...

*Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.*

Col. 4:5

When people find out we are followers of Christ they will be watching our behavior.

*The best argument for Christianity is Christians: their joy, their certainty, their completeness. But the strongest argument against Christianity is also Christians: when they are somber and joyless, when they are self-righteous and smug in complacent consecration, when they are narrow and repressive, then Christianity dies a thousand deaths.*

Sheldon Vanauken

At the same time our good character and conduct are not enough. We must be prepared to share our faith when the opportunity comes.

*Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.*

Col. 4:6



## Barriers to Faith in Christ

EMOTIONAL  
INTELLECTUAL  
VOLITIONAL

### Over Coming the Emotional Barrier

To help people overcome these three barriers lets us analyze them individually. The emotional barriers result from bad experiences. The emotional barrier is a set of negative feelings that a seeker has toward Christianity based on bad experiences with Christians or organized religion. People with the emotional usually react by isolating themselves from Christians. Our job is to show them how much we care about them by listening and investing in them. Someone once said, *“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”* Be prepared to invest your time, your talents and your treasures. Jesus told this story about how to use worldly wealth for the kingdom of God.

*The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.*

Luke 16:8-9:8

### Over Coming the Intellectual Barrier

The intellectual barrier is a predisposition to disregard or reject Christianity based upon bad information or misconceptions. People with the Intellectual Barrier usually are indifferent to Christians’ beliefs. We should do the research to help them find answers and sensitively respond to their objections and questions. Here are some common objections to Christianity.

- Is there really a God?
- Why do the innocent suffer?
- Is Christ the only way to God?
- Why believe Christ’s resurrection really took place?
- What about those who never heard about Christ?
- If Christianity is true, why are there so many hypocrites?
- Is the Bible accurate/true?

*But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.*

1 Peter 3:15

Be ready to turn objections into opportunities!

## Over Coming the Volitional Barrier

The Volitional Barrier is the act or power of making a choice or decision to not accept the message of the Gospel. The final barrier for all unbelievers is the Volitional Barrier or the will. It is a result of our sinful nature and unbelievers are helpless to overcome it in their own power. We are helpless to lead them over it. It is an act of God's saving grace. We must rely on God to open doors for sharing Christ with others. The unbeliever is not the enemy; he is the victim of the enemy. Christians must understand the condition of their unbelieving friends.

### **They are dead.**

*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air,*

Eph. 2:1

### **Your lost friends are blind.**

*And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.*

2 Cor. 4:3-5

### **Finally, they are ensnared.**

*And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.*

2 Tim. 2:24-26

**We must pray!** To pray is to declare our dependence on God, to no pray is to declare our independence from Him. The early church understood this.

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

Acts 1:8

*After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*

Acts. 4:31

- ⇒ **How Will You Pray?**
- ⇒ **What Will You Pray For?**
- ⇒ **Whom Will You Pray For?**

# Your Homework

## Reaching Your Network

**Step One:** List the individuals within your network using the following criteria.

1. You know them on a first name basis
2. You have regular contact with them
3. They don't seem to have a personal relationship with Christ
4. You feel they are responsive to you, or would be open to cultivating a relationship based upon common ground

**Biological**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Common Ground**

**Geographical**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Common Ground**

**Vocational**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Common Ground**

**Recreational**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Common Ground**

**Step Two:** List 3-5 common ground activities in which you are currently involved that a seeking friend would feel comfortable participating in as well

Write the name of the person you feel would be most receptive to cultivating a redemptive relationship on the line here \_\_\_\_\_

**Step Three:** Design an outreach strategy.

1. What one person in your network will you pray for? Make it a priority to pray each day at 1:00 pm for one minute for this one person.
2. How will you share your faith? How will you lead this person to faith?
3. Invest your time, talents and treasures into the life of this person.